

# the reflector

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Nothing says spring  
like an election  
(Pg.3)

# Opinion: Ms. Smith goes to Washington

*Premier Smith faces backlash after controversial interview surfaces*

**Ryan Montgomery**

Staff Writer



**Alberta Premier Danielle Smith is in hot water after requesting U.S. tariffs be put on pause until the Canadian federal election finishes. Photo courtesy of Flickr**

Political scandals are typically secretive affairs. Usually, it takes the press years of digging and prodding to get admissions of wrongdoing out of their elected officials. Naturally, politicians would make a concerted effort to hide any machiavellian wrongdoing from the scrutinizing eye of the electorate.

That's why the country was so perplexed when, on March 8, in a recorded interview for right-wing American news corporation Breitbart, Danielle Smith let slip that she asked American officials to put a halt on tariffs in order to impact the 2025 Canadian federal election.

In the interview, which was published over two weeks ago but resurfaced on March 23, Smith spoke to Breitbart about a number of topics including Conservative party leader, Pierre Poilievre, and the political impact of tariffs.

"Before the tariff war, I would say yes. I mean, Pierre

Poilievre is the name of the Conservative party leader, and he was miles ahead of Justin Trudeau. But because of what we see as unjust and unfair tariffs, it's actually caused an increase in the support for the Liberals," Smith explained.

The premier continued to state that she feared that the dispute would further benefit the Liberals.

"And so that's what I fear, is that the longer this dispute goes on, politicians posture, and it seems to be benefiting the Liberals right now. So I would hope that we could put things on pause—is what I've told administration officials. Let's just put things on pause so we can get through an election."

Asking for tariffs to be removed entirely is no act of wrongdoing—who wouldn't want their elected officials to ask the American administration to pause the destructive economic tariffs? Premiers are supposed to advocate on behalf of their

provinces, whether that be in Ottawa or Washington.

The issue arose when Smith explained her political considerations concerning the discussion. She laid out that the Liberals were benefitting politically from the tariffs, and that's why she asked the American government to stop them. Not to protect the fragile Canadian economy; not because the tariffs are inane, random and unwarranted, but because they were helping the Liberals in the polls.

Make a note of the premier's specific words: she asked them to pause the tariffs—not end them, pause. After the election, the Yanks are A-OK to bring the tariffs back and the millions of lost jobs that will follow. But as long as the tariffs are helping the Liberals, the premier wants them gone. This is what caused controversy in her statement—it was purely based on political considerations.

It's hard to overstate how big of an issue this is, especially because the UCP loves to sue, and I'm walking on eggshells here.

According to the federal chief electoral officer, Stéphane Perrault, this was not an illegal action by the premier. Despite that, it was certainly unethical. Asking a foreign government to alter its policy to affect a Canadian election is just a hop, skip and a jump away from full election meddling.

Even if Smith is fine on the legal side of this scandal, she certainly isn't hunky dory on the polling aspect. As many other premiers across the country have seen their approval rating spike in what has been dubbed the "Trump Bump," Smith has seen her approval stay the same. So, what did Smith have to say in her defence?

Sam Blackett, her press secretary, rejected the accusations, calling them "offensive and false."

If the only way you can hold your elected officials accountable is when no one's feelings get hurt, this may be my last article.

Smith claimed that she was doing the opposite, that she was, in fact, stopping election interference by asking the Americans to halt their tariffs. This was a flawed line of logic from the premier. The Liberals are benefiting from the tariffs because Canadians feel that they are the best party to deal with Trump.

Just because the Liberals have politically benefited from tariffs doesn't mean the Trump administration is interfering on their behalf. That's like saying the grass is conspiring with the clouds because the plants grow in the rain.

Smith, being dragged with the other souls of the dammed to the depths of

political scandal, decided that she wanted company on her way down and reached for the ankle of hopeful prime minister, Poilievre.

"I would say, on balance, the perspective that Pierre would bring would be very much in sync with, I think, the new direction in America," Smith told Breitbart.

In an election where the biggest issue is the American president, and the mere mention of his name in a positive context is anathema to the Canadian public, this comment by the premier no doubt caused quite a few migraines for Poilievre—who has struggled to distance himself from Trump in the eyes of the electorate as of late.

Trump gave him some wiggle room by claiming, "I think it's easier to deal, actually, with a Liberal. And maybe they're going to win, but I don't care."

As much as that dismissal may have helped Poilievre's message, Smith's admission may have caused just as much, if not more, damage.

If anything, this was a failure of Poilievre to distance himself from Smith. To extol the cause of national unity over the secessionist tendencies of the Albertan right.

However, he missed his shot.

Instead of denouncing the premier's comparison between his views and Trump's, he declined to comment on her statement. As the saying goes, silence indeed speaks volumes.

Taking into account the chief electoral officer's statement and the lack of any real reaction beyond the ire of the press and the public, it's looking like nothing will come of this interview except a few more grey hairs on the weathering temples of Poilievre.

# The 5 W's of Canada's upcoming snap election

**Bella Coco**

News Editor



**Canadians are set to head to the polls in less than a month to not just vote for a new prime minister but a leader who can stand up to Trump's tariffs. Photo provided by Pexels**

It's official: Canada's next federal election is taking place on April 28.

The election Canadians expected to be in October is now right around the corner, and candidates are left with a 25-day race to sway voters with big promises.

We're going to tackle the five W's—who, what, when, where and why—of the election.

## What

Legally, the maximum time between federal elections is five years. The next vote was officially scheduled for Oct. 20, 2025, however, an early election has been called. According to the BBC, two scenarios may spark an early election:

- When the Governor General accepts the prime minister's (PM) advice to dissolve the government, or if the Governor General accepts the PM's resignation after the government is defeated in a confidence vote in Parliament.
- Liberal party leader and Prime Minister Mark Carney triggered the election by doing the first scenario and asking Gov. Gen. Mary Simon to dissolve Parliament on March 23.

The dissolution of parliament brings a halt to all parliamentary business before the Senate, the House of Commons, and their adjacent committees and clears the way for a federal election.

## Why

With tensions rising between Canada and the U.S., numerous political leaders have been calling for an early election to navigate the trade war and Donald Trump's threat to Canada's sovereignty.

Justin Trudeau's resignation earlier this year has made Canadians anxious for a leader to navigate the pressure provided by their neighbours down south.

A study by Omnibus shows that 38 per cent of Canadians are distressed over the uncertainty of U.S. political tensions, and 52 per cent are worried about the rising cost of living. For the first time, avoiding a negative fallout with the U.S. is a top voter concern, surpassing even domestic issues.

There is also speculation that an early election could put Carney at an advantage due to the Liberal's rising recovery in the polls.

Carney has stated that he will work with Trump to represent what is best for Canadians as prime minister, but since the call for an election, he has been more assertive.

"We are facing the most significant crisis of our lifetimes because of President Trump's unjustified trade actions and his threats to our sovereignty," Carney said to reporters on Sunday. "Our response must be to build a strong economy and a more secure Canada. President Trump claims that Canada isn't a real country. He wants

to break us so America can own us. We will not let that happen."

## When

Despite the election taking place on April 28, Canadians can cast their vote on multiple dates.

Elections Canada outlines when you can vote:

- Vote on election day (Monday, April 28) at an assigned polling station.
- Vote on advance polling days (Friday, April 18; Saturday, April 19; Sunday, April 20; and Monday, April 21) at an assigned polling station.
- Vote early at any Elections Canada office across the country (until Tuesday, April 22, 6 p.m.).
- Vote by mail: Electors must plan and apply by Tuesday, April 22, at 6 p.m. and return their special ballot by mail (deadlines apply) or in person at their local Elections Canada office before polls close on election day.

- Electors planning to return their special ballot by mail should plan and ensure there is enough time to receive a voting kit and return their completed ballot to Elections Canada by the deadline indicated in their kit.

## Where

Voters can head to the Elections Canada website to find their electoral district and search using their postal code, province, maps, municipality, or candidate name. Canadians can find their voting location by searching their city, postal code, or address.

## Who

This W may arguably be the most important one of all. A federal election has a formidable cast involved, and it can be difficult to remember who's who in an election.

Let's start with the simple stuff: Who can vote?

You can vote in a Canadian election if you are a Canadian citizen, at least 18 years of age, and able to prove your identity and address.

Now that we've got that out of the way, let's dive into who eligible citizens can vote for.

Similar to the U.K. elections, Canadians do not directly vote for the candidate they want to be prime minister. Instead, they vote for the members of Parliament (MPs), who represent the leaders of running political parties with a seat in the House of Commons.

Ergo, the party leader with the majority amount of MPs will become prime minister.

There are currently 343 seats in the House of Commons. Each province has its own number of seats, which are represented by population.

At the time of the dissolution of Parliament, the Liberals led the majority with 152 seats, followed by the Conservatives with 120, the Bloc Québécois with 33, the New Democratic Party (NDP) with 24, and the Green Party with 2.

Now that we've figured out who has all of these seats, let's chat about the leaders of these political parties, also known as the candidates for prime minister of Canada.

- Leader of the Liberals: Mark Carney.
- Leader of the Conservatives: Pierre Poilievre.
- Leader of the Bloc Québécois: Yves-François Blanchet.
- Leader of the NDP: Jagmeet Singh.
- Co-leaders of the Green Party: Elizabeth May and Jonathan Pedneault.

Polls predict that the election will be a neck-and-neck race between Carney and Poilievre, both of whom have outwardly spoken about putting Canada first in its trade conflicts with the U.S.

Voters can head to Elections Canada's website to find their MP and a list of all searchable MPs when making their decision on casting their ballot.

As for Calgarians, there are 11 electoral districts within the city and a tentative list of candidates to vote for. Elections Canada has advised that "The complete list of confirmed candidates will be available on Wednesday, April 9, 2025."

Those interested in learning more about the election process and important information can visit Elections Canada.

## THE REFLECTOR

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## Stampede: The most expensive show on earth

*In a time of tariffs and financial crisis, the “Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth” should take a load off, not put expenses on*

**Liam Rockliffe**

Feature Editor

Everyone from Calgary knows about the Stampede. Every summer, the city comes alive with Western culture and tourists from all over Canada and the world come to see the musical and rodeo spectacles.

Most associate this time of year with crazy parties and good music, but many Calgarians associate the “Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth” with crammed city streets, ‘wanna-be-cowboys’ wearing skinny jeans into their boots and, of course, the ever-looming cost of actually attending the congested rodeo.

Now, this isn’t meant to hate on the Stampede, far from it. I think the Stampede has valuable ties to Canada’s Western culture, which is something that is easily forgotten in the city despite the rolling plains and acres of ranchland just outside the city limits. It’s the one time of year people from their office jobs or oil rigs can come to town, dress and act as cowboy as they wish and, for the most part, not get made fun of.

But as a student, with tuition, books, food and just life in general always keeping your wallet in the red, how is it possible to enjoy the Stampede when all that’s on your mind is the \$12 you just spent on a hotdog?

There are workarounds to the wallet assault, but the one thing that is almost completely unavoidable is the entry fee. At a manageable \$25 per person, this fee is inevitable, but workers or volunteers at the Stampede get free admission and also receive a plus one pass.

As for food and water, guests are allowed to bring their own supplies into the park. I recommend bringing a lunch and a ton of snacks



**Stampede season is coming back this summer, and with it comes the exuberant costs of entry. Photo courtesy of Instagram/@calgarystampede**

to avoid the exuberant menu prices. As for drinks, a sports drink and tons of water can stop you from getting dehydrated. A picnic blanket and sunscreen is always a good idea, too. Just bringing these basic necessities can save you upwards of \$30.

But before you even think about admission, you should first worry about your apparel. While not necessarily imperative to attending the Stampede, a good baseline of Western fashion never hurts at an event centred around a rodeo. The biggest piece of advice I can offer would be to not purchase anything from the stores on the grounds. The cheaper options will never last or look as good as you think, and the higher quality choices are more expensive than they are worth.

However, there are some cool knick knacks and blankets exclusively available at the Stampede. There are also plenty of country stores in and around Calgary, but I would personally recommend the homegrown locations, as the prices are better and they care about what they sell.

If you’re looking for a country emporium where all your Western needs can be satisfied, nowhere compares to Irvine Tack and Western Wear which is located 40 minutes north of Calgary and also available online.

If money-saving is your main priority, you can never go wrong with Facebook Marketplace, as there are tons of workwear in good condition and half-decent boots from Stampedes’ past available for much lower

prices.

As far as headwear is concerned, a ball cap instead of a full Western hat is more than acceptable Western fashion, but if you choose to splurge for a cowboy hat this Stampede, a straw hat will be best to keep your head cool under the sun and the budget intact.

When it comes to styling your clothes, I can only say please don’t wear skinny jeans with boots and know which way your cowboy hat is supposed to face.

As for events at the park, there are tons of non-ticketed events. Animal lovers can walk through the agricultural exhibits to see farm animals and learn about modern agriculture. Performances on the Coca-Cola Stage are completely free to watch and it usually includes plenty of

high-profile artists. There are several agricultural-style events dotted around the expansive map, from horse pulls to mini pony shows, so keep an eye on the events calendar and plan your trips accordingly. Other free events are the Dog Bowl and the Monster Energy Compound.

The rodeo and evening show at the GMC stadium are fun events but both come at a considerable price. The rodeo costs \$75 at the lowest to watch, and the evening show costs a minimum of \$95 depending on the day and events.

However, no matter the price point you buy your tickets at, everyone is free to stand near the front of the show to get the best view, but I recommend coming early to ensure a spot is available. Both of these events are hugely popular and can leave lasting memories. If you can afford to purchase a ticket, I highly recommend checking out the iconic rodeo events.

Most university-aged people come to the Stampede for the booze, but the price for a beer at the Stampede is over triple the price at West Gate Social. The only remedy for this is to either pay the price or remain sober.

This ties nicely to the next point—transportation. Whether drinking or sober, I recommend either taking public transportation, walking, or (only if necessary) taking an Uber. Parking at the Stampede grounds is next to impossible, and it has two C-train stops for a reason.

With all this newfound knowledge, you should be prepped for Stampede season, but if you’re wishing to brush up on rodeo and its culture, feel free to flip the page and learn more.

# Sharpen your spurs, rodeo season is coming up!

**Naomi Campbell**  
Staff Writer

## Alberta rodeo season

Going to a rodeo for the first time is something I hope everyone can experience at least once in their lives. Whether it's a small town rodeo with some famous in-house names, or the big scale Calgary Stampede with huge pro athletes from all over the world, it is a sight to see and a time to remember.

The Canadian Pro Rodeo Association (CPRA) holds events all over Alberta, with more stretching through Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and British Columbia.

The rodeo holds such a sacred place in many people's hearts as it is their lifestyle and how they were raised. The atmosphere

is electric during the rodeo, but the dances that are held at the events add another aspect of a community coming together to celebrate. So grab your jeans, shine up your boots, dust off your hats, and let's get ready to ride this rodeo season.

### Events to watch and athletes to look out for

The majority of rodeos will hold many events starting in the morning, and continuing into nightfall. These events include barrel racing, bronco riding, team roping, steer wrestling and everyone's favourite—bull riding. People come from all over the country to try and outshine their competitors

for a chance to earn enough points to compete at larger rodeos in America and Canada, such as the National Finals Rodeo (NFR) that is held in Las Vegas every December, and Professional Bull Riding (PBR) Canada.

If you plan on following the CPRA circuit this summer, the next upcoming rodeos in Alberta are in Medicine Hat from April 25-27, Taber from April 25-26, and Coleman from May 2-4. You can find the full schedule on the Canadian Pro Rodeo Association website.

Check out the full version of this article online at [thereflector.ca](http://thereflector.ca) or on our app to learn about some of the premier rodeo talents in the country.




Rodeo has been an important part of Alberta's soul for decades, and this continues with the upcoming season. Photo courtesy of David Butterwick

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 COMMUNITY KITCHEN

## From the Treasurer of Write Club



## the hypochondriac

By B. Kenneth Brown

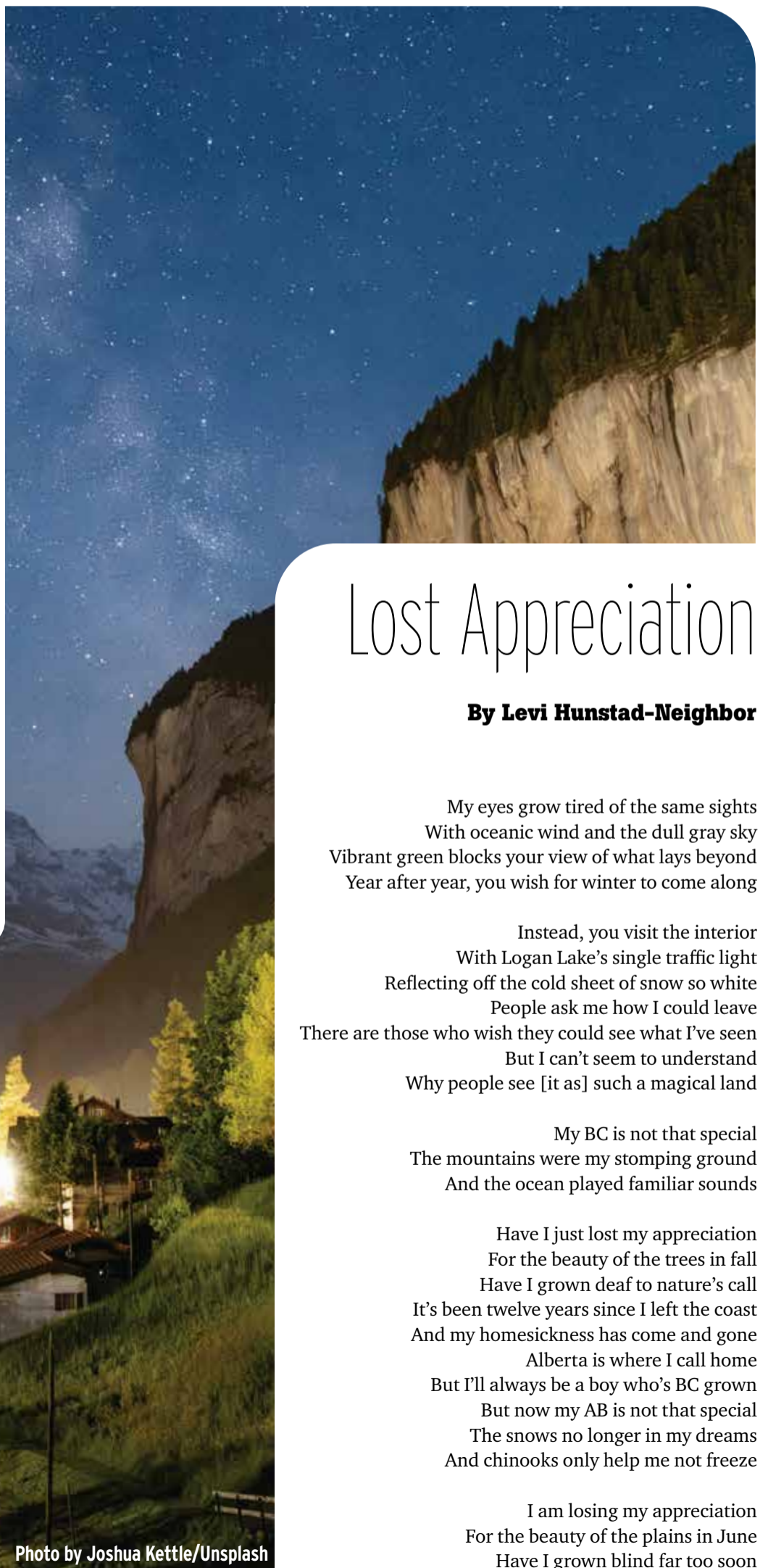
sixth day bedridden & my bones gasoline—the kind of ache that petroleums through marrow, makes joints creek like abandoned church doors. my skull milk-teeth the pillow, every nerve ending windowsilling into dusk. yr ghost still cottonmouths the sheets, fever-fresh & piss-clean, while whatever virus bloodrivers through me threatens to make a temporary hell permanent. too weak to walk into the hallway.

WebMD midnights: maybe Lyme disease forestfucking my white cells, or COVID playing the long game, carpenter-anting through organs until nothing works right. or maybe me/cfs came to altar me, chronically fatiguing my hands until they forget how to pray, how to write, how to do anything but thermometer this blazing 39.2°C flesh into meaning.

ancestors cigarette-whisper diagnostics from behind my eyelids: sometimes the body sage-bundles what the heart won't burn. my sweat petroleums the mattress, each breath gasping like a walleye hauled from Red River, gills crusading for oxygen while MayoClinic rabbit-holes into another apocalypse of possibilities.

gravity bruises differently now, each heartbeat thunderbirding against ribs, medicine-wheeling these questions: what if this is forever? Body gone reservation, colonized by invisible enemy treaty-breaches through my blood. what if the days keep frankensteining body parts into permanent stranger?

night nurses the window, moonlight gasoline-spilling across carpet and I count ceiling-tile constellations, wondering if health is love—hallwaying us awake, interrupted by morning.



## Lost Appreciation

By Levi Hunstad-Neighbor

My eyes grow tired of the same sights  
With oceanic wind and the dull gray sky  
Vibrant green blocks your view of what lays beyond  
Year after year, you wish for winter to come along

Instead, you visit the interior  
With Logan Lake's single traffic light  
Reflecting off the cold sheet of snow so white  
People ask me how I could leave  
There are those who wish they could see what I've seen  
But I can't seem to understand  
Why people see [it as] such a magical land

My BC is not that special  
The mountains were my stomping ground  
And the ocean played familiar sounds

Have I just lost my appreciation  
For the beauty of the trees in fall  
Have I grown deaf to nature's call  
It's been twelve years since I left the coast  
And my homesickness has come and gone  
Alberta is where I call home  
But I'll always be a boy who's BC grown  
But now my AB is not that special  
The snows no longer in my dreams  
And chinooks only help me not freeze

I am losing my appreciation  
For the beauty of the plains in June  
Have I grown blind far too soon

# A Love Poem

By Rachel Fitzgibbon

You ask why I don't write you more poetry  
Ask why I won't tell you I love you through words  
But you just can't see that I've already given you poetry  
through our lives.

Poems like this one.

One, like the single orange we shared at lunch, citrus juice  
running down my wrists as I split it into two halves

Two, like the pair of mittens I knitted you in the winter to  
keep out the chill, that turned out poorly, they were uneven  
and had three holes in them

Three, like the number of times I folded the piece of paper  
I gave you, blushing as I handed you a letter containing my  
heart where I asked for your time

Four, like the number of lines in the love note I wrote for you  
in August, written on the concrete in chalk and washed away  
by the summer storm that blew in five days later

Five, like the number of coats it took to finally cover that hot  
pink paint on the walls in your bedroom with a non offensive  
beige, the week before you moved out of that apartment at  
6th street and King

Six, like the time you woke me up in the morning on a cold  
fall day so we could hike to see the sunrise, but we got  
distracted on the trail and missed it by seven minutes

Seven, like the number of miles between our childhood  
homes, and yet somehow we didn't meet until we were well  
past eighteen

Eight, like the number of times I've slept on the couch after  
a fight and woke up the next morning to you pressed into my  
side, trying not to slide off as the clock ticks past nine a.m.

Nine, like the number of coffee mugs that sit on the counter  
since they don't fit in the cupboard, but since they make you  
smile, I still bought you one more.

One, like the number of poems you say I've given you  
As if the rest of it doesn't count

As if you don't see that all this, all the mugs and mittens and  
mornings with you  
This too is poetry

# Tenses

By Rachel Fitzgibbon

I pause when I catch myself talking about you in present tense,  
Discussing you like you can still change your mind.

I always write in past tense,  
In the was and did.

But when I write about you I want you to be present,  
You are. You do. You live.

I want to keep you around like that stupid novelty air freshener you  
gave me,

Something I can take for granted,  
Something I can always get more of,

More time with you,

More jokes and long talks,

More time spent drinking coolers by the pool,

With soil under our nails, sun on our faces, laughter in our hearts,

More summers and winters,

More. More. More.

I catch myself talking about you in the present tense,

As if you're still present,

And why must I put you in the past when you are still present in my  
soul,

Why must I let you go when I wanted more time,

I'm not ready to refer to you as Was,

Was a friend,

Was a good man,

Was alive,

Is missed.

I'll keep you alive by talking about you in the present tense,

You still are.

To me, you still are.



Photo by Karsten Winegeart/Unsplash

# Choke

By Dovonna Meloche

Some nights start like this,  
thoughts too mean, too loud.  
Their oppressive tendrils  
a vice holding you down.

The hands are your own.

Inhale,

Replace the doubt with mud,  
muffle the thoughts with fog.  
With this fleeting bliss.  
One that sets your throat on fire.

Scorching yourself from the inside out.

Exhale.

The heady feeling seeps into muscles  
like a poisonous friend's embrace.  
Wraps itself around the mind and heart,  
tears and disconnects from the body.

Pretending that it helps.

Inhale,

The familiar numbness  
like floating on the surface of a lake.  
Put the world on mute,  
mute yourself.

You don't notice the comfortable cage you've built.

Exhale.

Fingers prickle, eyes burn.  
Warm face, dry mouth.  
Distract from the chaos,  
sink into the distorted calm,

Until you drown.

Inhale,

Choke—  
Sputter, and hack,  
lungs afire.  
Chest aching from the absence of self.  
A cavern you fill with sticky, acrid smoke.

Exhale.

And do it all over again.

# To the Moon

By Bailey Wilson

Silence can be louder than a full symphony  
 And more delicate than a broken wing  
 And here in this room, it chokes me  
 Takes the air from my lungs and leaves me gasping  
 Drowning on nothing but my own grief  
 The silence in this room is deafening  
 My phone rests in my limp hand  
 And I know the call is still connected  
 But the words that were spoken have rendered anymore  
 meaningless  
 I wonder if it was silent when she passed  
 My Grandmother did not like silence  
 I remember our last family dinner  
 As she sat at the head of the table  
 Looking at children and grandchildren  
 And she smiled  
 Because she was so happy to just be around us  
 My grandmother and I  
 We didn't just say I love you  
 We said  
 I love you to the moon and back  
 And now I wonder if I will ever see the moon  
 Without it being accompanied  
 by the hollow feeling of loss  
 Someone once told me  
 That when the ones we love pass on  
 They become the brightest stars in the sky  
 That evening, I share my last cup of tea with my Grandmother  
 I sit on the front step and tell her how we've been  
 That her dogs are taken care of  
 And when I say goodbye  
 I tell her I love her  
 To the moon and back  
 And I hope  
 That wherever she may be  
 It's full of life and love  
 And I hope that there is no silence

Photo by Dave Hoefler /Unsplash

# Desire Path

By Emma Marion

School must be some sort of peculiar punishment that someone made up to torture kids for having too much fun. Instead of being here, I want to go outside and roll in the green grass, or take a magnifying glass to the ant hill by the side of the fence. I want to run through the forest behind the house and throw rocks at squirrels, dip my feet in the creek, and pick flowers to bring home to my mom.

I collect all sorts of flowers for her. Prickly bull thistles, warm yellow dandelions, tall stocks of goldenrod, and her absolute favourites, the Alberta wild rose. Every time I collect flowers for her, I clutch them tight in my hands and close to my heart, the thorns from the roses stabbing into my skin until I start to bleed. I don't ever mind, because I know how much mom loves them. She's tried growing them in our garden multiple times, but mom has anything but a green thumb. That's why I pick them for her. They bring colour into a seemingly dead household, and a soft smell to the air.

Our house always seems so bleak, so grey. Dad passed away five years ago, when I was seven, and sometimes it felt like his ghost stood where his body used to. He's present in the pictures in the hallways, watching me grow up. Mom brought him to my grade six graduation by wearing his old, and now broken, watch. She wears his shirts sometimes, and I hear her crying every time she has to wash one, knowing she's washing his "scent" off. She said that there was no smell like that of someone you love.

My wildflowers bring life into a house that rarely sees it, and an old sparkle to my mom's eyes. I wish I could see it more often. I love when my mom is happy, even if it is few and far between. She used to be such a proud and elegant woman, but now she stands hunched over, cold and empty. A husk of what she used to be.

Sitting in my uncomfortable desk today, barely listening to my teacher, is like torture knowing my mom is at home wasting away in her chair. Right now, I can't pick any wildflowers. The sound of the bell ringing pulls me out of my grim thoughts, and I run home as fast as I can. My chest is heaving and my breath is hot by the time I reach the forest. I keep running down the desire path I made after several trips through it.

Desire path. A path created by consistent travel on the same pathway, out of convenience or familiarity. My desire path leads me towards the creek where I can pick flowers, and then home, where I will always find mom sitting at the kitchen table knitting, the needles clicking loudly and melodically together. I travel this path as often as I know flowers will be growing.

Today I only found two wild rose flowers around the creek, so I clutch those flowers like my life depends on it, pretending it doesn't hurt my hand. I reach the house and I give today's picks over to mom, apologizing for the lack of the small pink roses that she loves so much. I wait for her reaction. Mom says nothing, but she smiles at me, and everything feels whole again.

# Dreamer's Day Moon

By Christina Jarmics

To be remembered like the presence of the moon,  
 in the morning or  
 faintly painted on the day's sky  
 is the dreamer's wish.

A soft voice whispering  
 "I'm here"

Making figures around stop,  
 look up,  
 see the moon, as it  
 Awkwardly rests within the sun's embrace.

Wishing others to see the dreamer for who they are,  
 even after their last breath greets them.

Take a minute's moment,  
 account their accomplishments,  
 Workshop work left untouched, and  
 turn the numerous pages of exposition.

Before turning it to dust, and  
 Forgetting their silent presence.

A dreamers presence is not one of the moon basking at  
 night  
 gazed upon by young lovers, or  
 sleepless children.

Day moons are for dreamers,  
 only remembered by a few, as oddities or  
 anomalies.

Maybe one day a book or calendar  
 will be made about the dreamer.  
 Cameras creatively capturing  
 the beauty of the moon  
 basking in the presence of the sun.

Maybe others will purchase  
 the produced propaganda.  
 Long after the dreamers gone,  
 conveniently converted memories  
 distantly displaced, by those who  
 saw,  
 cared, and knew them.

Let dreamers work play out like a day moon,  
 where only those who truly adore it,  
 will see them in the sky,  
 in books or  
 confined within calendars littering walls and desks.

Let the beauty of the dreamer disappear in life gracefully  
 only reappearing as an anomaly,  
 with the sun as their witness.

Leave this poem, like myself  
 painted within the blue dome of sky,  
 quietly waiting,  
 watching behind the sun's glare.

A day dreamer's poem, for their day moon.

# Apollo

By August Ellington

I stare at the sun. Incandescent rays drown the world and all I see is the sun. A white hot ball of gas. Life itself. My retinas are scorched, and I can not stare at the sun. I close my eyes. I see digital artifacts, vivid technicolour abstractions shifting without purpose or conclusion. I stand in the sun. Comforting warmth beating down on my skin. I feel peace, I am surrounded by abundance. My flesh is boiling, and I can not stand in the sun.

I can't stop thinking about god. Or God? If there is a god, gods, or God, what does that mean? A religious explanation is unlikely. Holy forces capable of wielding unimaginable power, molding the universe to their liking. Nature in its impossible intricacy, all of the pieces coming together at the perfect moment for life to occur, for sentience. Mired in bureaucracy. Would a celestial being, able to comprehend every insignificance of existence simultaneously, across time's totality, care about rules? Would it construct a cosmic constitution? In the face of nebulae that dwarf the Earth by a factor of a million, are abortions the preeminent evil? A natural conclusion would be the absence of any such entity. But I can't embrace the cold comfort of randomness. Of unfettered chaos bringing us into existence. Of course, I would like to, but there's a problem. Something shattered my reality, and I still haven't picked up the pieces. Every shard of glass slicing my hands as I try to confront, to understand, what the fuck is going on.

In August, I dreamt that I walked through Times Square and a man in a Spider-Man costume called me racist. In November, I walked through Times Square and a man in a Spider-Man costume called me racist. Time folded in on itself, every preconceived notion about the nature of reality had burned away. My friends were ahead of me. I was surrounded by tourists, locals, mascots, LCD billboards. But in that moment, I was alone. I was horrified. My mind became lawless, unburdened by my death grip on reality. For months I did not speak of it. For weeks I tried to ignore it. But it happened again. It happened so many times I lost track. Maybe it was a glitch that I alone was plagued by. Maybe it was coincidence, the sheer power of the human mind predicting a dozen or so random events with perfect accuracy. Maybe it was god. Or God? Over and over again, I would dream, and then it would happen. No interpretation, or vague feelings of something wrong or something good. Like a recording sent back in time, a film for an audience of Me. As though I were trying to leave the cave, staring through a crack that I couldn't quite breach.

After growing up in a half-baked attempt at a Christian household, I never really understood the idea of worship. Of prayer. It all seemed silly, going to church maybe twice a month. My father was completely apathetic to any ideas regarding divinity. My mother would perform esoteric Buddhist chants while driving me to school and then tell me to never follow that path. And that tarot was demonic. And to never be polyamorous, because that was also demonic? It really cemented that much of her spiritual guidance was completely meaningless to me as an adolescent who just wanted to watch cartoons and play video games. I found religion, while not some illogical aberrance, to be personally pointless. Life was, as far as I was aware, good. Then I suffered. Then I persevered. Then I went to New York. Then I revisited God.

Staring out windows, praying for answers. Or an internship. I began to feel powerful, like all of the esoterica I loved to gawk at may have had a potency I had only just become privy to. Once I wished for money to fall from the sky, as one does when they're chronically broke. Then I dreamt I found a wad of cash on the ground. Then I found nine hundred dollars on the ground. But I refused to embrace the unknown. I was too scared of finding something even harder to understand. I was afraid of god. Of the gods. Of God. Afraid of anything existing that could warp the world on a whim. Afraid that I could somehow invoke a miraculous sledgehammer that would decimate all logic or reasoning. So I ignored the dreams. I ceased wishing. And it stopped. And I suffered. And I began to forget. Every now and again, I wonder what it all meant. If it's possible to reclaim the feeling that I could transcend my material existence. That there was more than my flesh.

I stare at the moon. A soft glow illuminates the glade, the woods still coated in darkness. A distant satellite, accompanying the Earth in the void. My eyes see clearly; the craters, the stars, the clouds. I keep my eyes open and see the world, if but a microcosm. I stand in the moonlight. I feel the wind cool my skin, the grass cushioning my feet. Only in my soul do I feel the moon, as it reflects light without heat. I feel peace, I am surrounded by abundance. I can sleep in the moonlight.

## PROFILE: Virginia Bruneau

*A champion for clean water and change*

**Emma Marshall**

Arts Editor

“We used to have a light outside. It was a post that lit up the whole backyard, but because money was so tight, they had to cut it off.”

Virginia Bruneau remembers that moment with clarity—the light symbolizing a glimmer of hope that was slowly dimming. Yet, even in the darkest of times, she learned from her father the power of love, growth and resilience.

Now, as an adult and mother, Bruneau is determined to bring light back to her community in a different way—by fighting for clean water infrastructure on First Nations reserves.

Bruneau, a member of Cold Lake First Nations, is on a mission to ensure that future generations don’t have to grow up without basic necessities.

Her work addressing water and housing infrastructure on First Nations reserves is just one facet of her larger mission to empower children and inspire them to see their potential.

Her story is one of resilience—inspired by the struggles and triumphs of her own family.

“Growing up on the reserve, we had a very well-kept home,” Bruneau recalls, reflecting on a childhood that, despite challenges, was filled with love and routine.

Her father, Greg Jacko, was a key figure in the community, working tirelessly to improve the living conditions of those around him.

His most notable achievement was his role in a peaceful strike/sit-in that resulted in the building of new schools on Cold Lake and surrounding reserves in the

early ‘70s. It was a moment that left an indelible mark on Bruneau, sparking a fire in her to push for change.

Now, with her upcoming book, *We Were Much More Than Porridge*, set to be published this October, Bruneau is using her voice to inspire the next generation to overcome adversity and believe in their worth.

“You have to tell children they are important, and what they bring to the world is important,” she says.

Through her personal story, her activism and her unwavering commitment to her community, Bruneau is lighting the way for others—just as her father once did.

“We still don’t have running water,” Bruneau reflects. “That’s how they set it up. It’s a hand to mouth mentality that they put First Nations in.”

This statement is not just a lament but a call to action, a reason why she founded Tu-Kanatan Inc.

“Tu means water in Dene, Kanatan means clean and pure in Cree,” she explains, underscoring her mission to provide essential services to First Nations reserves that have been overlooked for far too long.

Dene is the language spoken by Cold Lake First Nations, and Cree is the language her husband’s family speaks. She used both languages in building her business to represent the continued support of the people around her.

Her drive stems not just from the lack of basic needs like clean water but from a deeper passion to uplift the youth of her community and inspire them to overcome the

systemic barriers that have long held them back.

Bruneau’s journey wasn’t without its struggles. She became a Christian in 1983 and faced personal challenges, including navigating difficult relationships with law enforcement and her children.

But, through it all, she was determined to forge her own path.

Tu-Kanatan Inc. is currently on pause after the passing of her business partner, but Bruneau is pursuing other methods of advocacy with the same goal in mind.

Spearheading her own craft business, Freedom Earrings by Ginny, Bruneau makes delicate jewelry and wreaths by hand. She uses the money from this business to support herself and her family through the writing of her book, which is now in the final stages of publication.

The book is a reflection of Bruneau’s own growth and healing. Written over the last several years, it delves into her experiences, her family’s history, and the larger struggles of Indigenous communities.

“My father used to make porridge for us every morning of our life, and what [my parents] went through in residential schools was totally contrary,” says Bruneau. “They made them porridge, alright, but they didn’t put any sugar. They didn’t give them any bread, just a plop of porridge and that was it.”

“In contrast, my father made us porridge every morning and would make sure to put sugar in there. He would make toast for us. He would get up early to get the house warm for us, and he



Virginia Bruneau is a passionate member of Cold Lake First Nations and is soon to be an author of her biography, *We Were Much More Than Porridge*. Photo courtesy of Virginia Bruneau

would make porridge for us,” she recalls with a smile.

This image of her father making porridge and caring for his children deeply impacted Bruneau, leading her to write *We Were Much More Than Porridge*. She hopes the book will inspire children, particularly on First Nations reserves, to understand their worth and potential.

In her years of activism, Bruneau has faced opposition, and at times, felt the weight of a system that appears indifferent to the struggles of First Nations communities. But her experience has also taught her the power of compassion.

“It’s so important not to live your life by yourself, thinking of your own needs,

but thinking of the needs of others,” she says. “That is so very valuable.”

Bruneau’s story is one of persistence, of never giving up on her people or her mission.

“I feel like [my work] is going to influence a lot of children for the better,” she says. “Because if a woman like myself can go through the challenges that I did and still come out relatively happy, they can do it too.”

In a world where many Indigenous communities face systemic neglect, Virginia Bruneau’s voice stands as a beacon of hope.

In the face of adversity, Bruneau is showing her community that they are more than just survivors—they are champions of change.

### OUT'N ABOUT

#### GlobalFest

Celebrating Calgary’s diverse communities, GlobalFest, a cultural and firework festival is taking place from Aug. 14 to 23. With performances, food, and firework displays, each night represents a different culture. Tickets start as low as \$12.50 and are available at [www.globalfest.ca](http://www.globalfest.ca).

#### 4th Street Lilac Festival

A celebration of spring, music, and art, the annual Lilac Festival is returning to 4th Street on June 1 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The free event hosts over 500 vendors and provides stages for local artists to perform throughout the day. This event is not ticketed and is open to the public.

#### Calgary Folk Music Festival

Returning to Calgary from July 24 to 27, the iconic folk festival is set to take over Prince’s Island Park. Since 1980, Calgary Folk Fest has celebrated emerging artists on seven unique stages. Tickets go on sale on April 2, and more information can be found at [www.calgaryfolkfest.com](http://www.calgaryfolkfest.com).

#### Badlands Music Festival

Just off of 9th Ave., Badlands Music Festival welcomes a stacked group of headliners throughout all of Stampede week. Ranging from Tiesto to Subtronics, this music festival is a must-see. Festival passes and day tickets can be purchased at [www.badlandsmusicfest.com](http://www.badlandsmusicfest.com).

# Sliding into summer

## A preview of Sled Island 2025

**Emma Marshall**

Arts Editor

The Sled Island Music Festival is back for another year. From June 18 to 22 Calgary's downtown core will be exploding with colourful talent to explore.

In case you're in the dark, here's what you need to know about one of Calgary's most eclectic and authentic celebrations of music and art.

### Where it started

It was 2007—a year that saw Steve Jobs unveil the first iPhone, Britney Spears face a public breakdown, and Lindsay Lohan make headlines (yet again) for her arrests.

Amidst this chaos, the angst-ridden youth, fueled by My Chemical Romance and ripped jeans, discovered something new—the Sled Island Music Festival. Brought

to Calgary's underground scene, Sled Island quickly became a symbol of community and culture.

Since its inception in 2007, this multi-day festival has evolved into a cornerstone of the city's cultural landscape, continually growing to offer fresh experiences and unexpected discoveries for those who attend.

With over 180 emerging acts spanning genres from rock and indie to hip-hop and electronic, Sled Island works to include as many forms of art and music as possible.

"It adds a huge spark to my creative self," says Glockabelle, a New York-based artist on this year's line-up. "Getting to see other bands and connect with other artists is so positive."

Glockabelle is a "one-

woman shred fest" known for her energetic sound and unique performances using casiotones and glockenspiels. Handpicked by guest curator, Okotobe Beaver, her Calgary-debut includes opening for The Mummies on June 19 and for Snööper on June 20.

### Special events

Aside from music, Sled Island also offers unique exhibitions to feature art and film in the city.

The festival pairs with local artists each year to create limited-edition posters and merchandise for attendees to purchase. In the past, Sled Island has hosted comedians and visual artists, too.



**Glockabelle is a New York based artist known for her unique performances with casiotones and glockenspiels. Photo by Lindsay Nolin-Evans**

**Continues on Pg.13**

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**Continued from Pg.12**

Outside of the festival weekend, Sled Island also throws pop-up events to engage the community.

On Saturday, April 26, Sled Island is hosting a student mixer at BLOX Arts Centre. With no admission fee, complimentary snacks, and cheap drinks, this party is aimed at bringing music lovers together while watching secret performances from artists on the 2025 Sled lineup.

One of Sled Island's appeals is the sense of discovery that comes with attending. Festival manager Hemen Tor-Agbidye says these one-of-a-kind experiences are the "backbone of Sled Islands mission."

Tor-Agbidye, who first attended Sled Island in 2014 and performed in 2015, has been with the festival for three years now. He understands the importance of keeping the festival accessible to "bring folks in" while also fostering an environment where attendees can freely explore new sounds, experiences and artists.

"There will always be acts that you don't know. This is a discovery festival, so you're not meant to know all of the artists. You're supposed to go and discover your new favourite band from a random show you pop into," Tor-Agbidye explains.

One of the signature events of Sled Island is the Rock Lotto where musicians from all over the festival are put into bands for the day. These artists—never having performed together and often with completely different styles—are given one day to create an entire set together, which they then perform that night.

These one-off performances are always a highlight,

showcasing the diversity of talent and the unexpected magic that happens when artists from different genres and backgrounds come together.

This year, the lineup is expected to be as diverse as ever, with 70 acts from across Calgary, and over 100 from around the globe.

"I'm excited to make these performances as epic as I can, but I'm also looking forward to being introduced to Calgary," said Glockabelle. "I've never been and I have heard it is really beautiful."

**The nature of the festival**

The success of Sled Island is due in part to the incredible volunteers and the long-standing venues that make the festival possible. Every year, approximately 300 volunteers help keep things running smoothly, ensuring that attendees have an unforgettable experience.

Among the many venues, several have become iconic staples of the festival such as, The Royal Canadian Legion, The Palomino Smokehouse, Central United Church, Dickens, Commonwealth and more.

These venues are more than just locations for performances—they're the heartbeat of the festival, each one offering its own unique vibe and atmosphere for festival-goers to enjoy. With a mixture of adult-only and all-ages venues, Sled Island is able to share the magic across all demographics.

"We see a lot of young punk kids and teenagers," says Tor-Agbidye. "We try to give them opportunities to go out and enjoy the music and engage in the scene"

Tor-Agbidye is proud of how the festival has

become a platform for new talent, regardless of age or background.

"We are really focused on giving opportunities to emerging acts," he says. "A lot of festivals are focused on bringing in these bigger acts, but Sled Island is known for building up emerging talent and giving them those opportunities."

In 2019, pop-icon Jack Harlow performed at The Palace Theatre with Sled Island. The following year, his hit-single "WHATS POPPIN" broke the charts, and a once emerging act became headliner status.

This dedication to showcasing up-and-coming artists is what makes Sled Island such a unique and exciting event.

**How to Sled**

A full festival pass is the best way to dive into all that Sled Island has to offer, whether it's music, comedy, film, or art. The passes come in different options, including the Discovery Pass (18+), Discovery Plus Pass (18+), and All-Ages Pass (for younger attendees).

Two-thirds of venue capacities are typically reserved for pass holders, so you're guaranteed to be able to get into most shows with one of these passes. For those who can't commit to the full five days, day passes are also available.

Sled Island has come a long way since its humble beginnings, and it continues to be a festival that celebrates both the local music scene and the global diversity of emerging talent. Whether you're a long-time fan or a first-time attendee, Sled Island offers a one-of-a-kind experience that is not to be missed.



**MUSIC**  
Playboi Carti  
**AWGE,**  
Interscope  
Records  
**Score: D**

Playboi Carti has always been a polarizing figure in the world of hip-hop, laying mumble rap bars over experimental instrumentals and attracting as many haters as fans. His first two projects, *Playboi Carti* and *Die Lit*, are some of the most iconic albums of this generation, but I believe his downfall began with some of the tracks on his third studio album, *Whole Lotta Red*. Five years later, Carti gave us his fourth studio album, *MUSIC*, to much anticipation.

Unfortunately, this album only produced even more disappointment. The only good songs on the album are those with features, with the worst songs being Carti's solo tracks—that's a serious problem.

Travis Scott, Future, The Weeknd, Young Thug, Ty Dolla \$ign, Lil Uzi Vert, Jhené Aiko, and even Kendrick Lamar make

appearances on the album and save it from being a complete disaster. However, Carti's performances leave much to be desired as they lack the smoothness he established in his first two projects while also coming up short on the vicious energy he provided on *Whole Lotta Red*.

In all of his performances on this project, Carti sounds lazy, apart from "BACKDOOR" featuring Jhené Aiko and Kendrick Lamar and "RATHER LIE," which featured The Weeknd. "PHILLY" with Travis Scott, "WE NEED ALL DA VIBES" with Young Thug and Ty Dolla \$ign and "TRIM" with Future are also certified bangers, but overall, this album leaves me disappointed in Carti and gets a well-deserved D.

—Zafir Nagji



**Alligator Bites Never Heal (Extended)**  
Doechii  
Capitol Records  
**Score: A**

Doechii is a Tampa-based rapper who rose to fame due to her unique spin on rap, R&B and pop. The 26-year-old rapper had a huge year with the drop of her album, *Alligator Bites Never Heal*. Not only did she walk away from the Grammys with Best Rap Album this season, but she also cemented the album's immense significance by becoming the third woman in history to ever claim the award. Huge win for the girls.

The album itself is nothing short of phenomenal. As a writer, I found myself particularly captivated by the lyrics—Doechii was dropping truly unforgettable lines. She proves her talent through her ability to draw from real-world experience.

Her way of twisting current pop trends into her music is truly one of a kind. I would go as far to say that she is slowly inching away at creating her own spin-off genre. "PROFIT," and "BOILED PEANUTS,"

were perfect examples of the bars that she was dropping, with sayings like 'easy, breezy, beautiful, erratic,' to 'I'm a dying sunflower leaving a trail of seeds.'

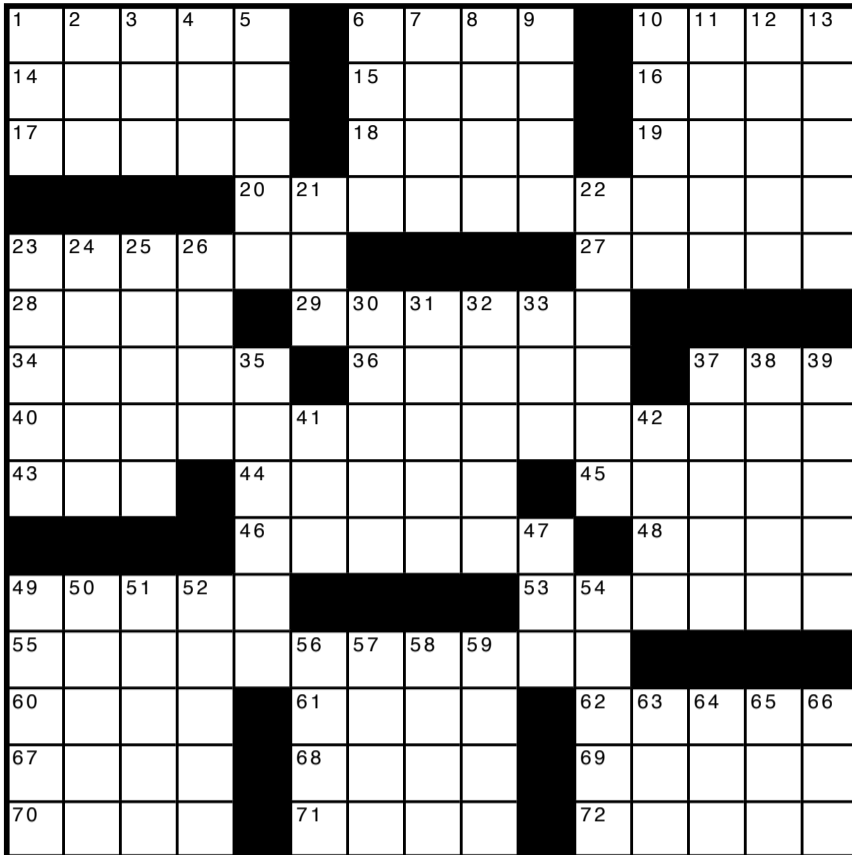
Despite the fact that tracks like "Anxiety" and "DENIAL IS A RIVER" being extremely popular on the radio, the album also has a wealth of poetry and undiscovered gems from her own life as well as contemporary pop culture. Needless to say, not only does Doechii deserve the praise that she is getting for this album but she deserves even more. She is a born performer as she exhibited on the Grammy's stage this year. Everyone is highly anticipating what she is going to do next.

—Mia Smith



Sled Island is a multi-day festival celebrating music and arts around the city. Photo by Britt Rose/@brittrose\_ on Instagram

# THE REFLECTOR CROSSWORD



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com (<https://www.bestcrosswords.com>). Used with permission.

**ACROSS**

- 1. Lady of the house
- 6. Sleuth Wolfe
- 10. RR stops
- 14. Russian pancake
- 15. Big times
- 16. Boy or man
- 17. Annex
- 18. Ho Chi \_\_\_\_
- 19. Theater award
- 20. Crowded
- 23. Company acquired by another
- 27. Siouan speakers
- 28. Duel tool
- 29. Sadat's

- predecessor
- 34. We're Off \_\_\_\_ the Wizard
- 36. Laughs loudly
- 37. Attorneys' org.
- 40. Like afterschool activities
- 43. Bad start?
- 44. Native-born Israeli
- 45. \_\_\_\_ Perot
- 46. Comic Boosler
- 48. Car
- 49. Horrify
- 53. Yellow
- 55. Soviet ballet dancer
- 60. Moisturizer ingredient
- 61. Ethereal: Prefix
- 62. Liability's opposite
- 67. Miller, for one
- 68. Comparison word
- 69. Memory failure
- 70. Weapons
- 71. Squeal
- 72. Ginger cookies
- 12. Wonderland girl
- 13. Looks for
- 21. Female lobster
- 22. Soup made with beets
- 23. Doled (out)
- 24. Adhesive resin
- 25. Reposes
- 26. Grandpa Walton portrayer
- 30. Island off Venezuela
- 31. Grieved
- 32. It's a wrap
- 33. "\_\_\_\_ tu" (Verdi aria)
- 35. Atelier items
- 37. For all to hear
- 38. Tack with long stitches
- 39. Favored crime of pyromaniacs
- 41. "Silent" prez
- 42. Russian range
- 47. Swelled head
- 49. Addis \_\_\_\_, Ethiopia
- 50. More wan
- 51. Introduction
- 52. Australia's \_\_\_\_ Rock
- 54. Racetracks
- 56. Panama and bowler
- 57. "M\*A\*S\*H" soft drink
- 58. Persia, today
- 59. Monarch
- 63. \_\_\_\_ Clemente
- 64. Mineral spring
- 65. Clairvoyant's gift
- 66. French possessive

**DOWN**

- 1. Wharton deg.
- 2. City official: Abbr.
- 3. Carried out
- 4. "Wheel of Fortune" buy
- 5. Chop into small pieces
- 6. Verne captain
- 7. Rocker Clapton
- 8. Social standing
- 9. Dept. \_\_\_\_ of Labor div.
- 10. Young salmon
- 11. Off-limits

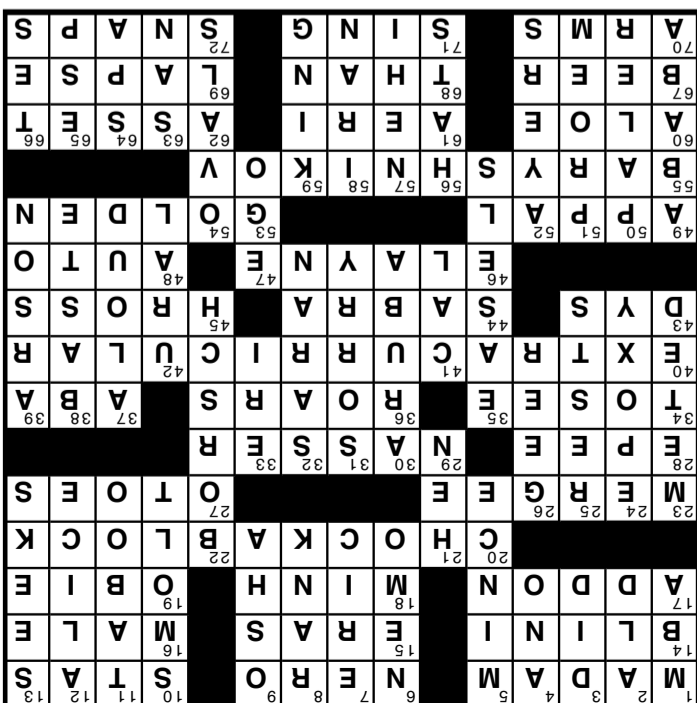
See answer grid at bottom of page

## MEET THE COUGARS

Calgary high school phenom and MRU Cougars commit Jacob McLellan, #3, who took his St. Mary's Saints basketball team to back-to-back city championships and their first-ever 4A provincial championship. Averaging 28 points and eight rebounds, the 6'3" future star is a crafty scorer with endless energy and is set to make an immediate impact in his first season as a Cougar next year. Welcome to MRU, Jacob!



Photo courtesy of @jaeeefilms



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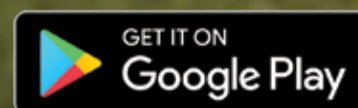


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# A season of success for MRU men's hockey

## Cougars play longest game in tournament history in first appearance at University Cup

Naomi Campbell, Staff Writer & Zafir Nagji, Sports Editor

The Mount Royal University Cougars men's hockey team made history this 2024-25 season. Finishing with a 22-6 record, the Cougars earned a first-round bye, won a gruelling second-round series against the University of Alberta Golden Bears, and made it to the Canada West finals for the first time in program history. Even though they lost in three games to the University of Saskatchewan Huskies, being in the finals meant that the boys got the honour of flying to Ottawa to compete in the U SPORTS University Cup against the best teams from across Canada.

Defenceman Clay Hanus was selected for five separate awards across Canada West and U SPORTS. In Canada West, Hanus was awarded with Player of the Year, Top Defenceman, and Top Scorer. He also became the first defenceman in U SPORTS history to win the Senator Joseph A. Sullivan Trophy for U SPORTS Most Outstanding Player and U SPORTS Top Defenceman.

The U SPORTS University Cup, which was held in Ottawa, was projected to be one of the best tournaments fans have witnessed in years. With the University of New Brunswick winning the Cup the past two years, they were the fan favourite to win for the third time in a row. Other teams from across Canada, such as the University of Saskatchewan, Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU), and Queen's University, were going to be tough contenders for the Cougars to have to battle against.

### Playing the long(est) game

After the Cougars were defeated in Canada



After making history with their first-ever appearance at the U SPORTS University Cup, the MRU Cougars men's hockey team took a heartbreaking 5-4 loss in a quintuple overtime thriller, setting the record for the longest game in U SPORTS history. Photo courtesy of Greg Kolz

West by the University of Saskatchewan Huskies, they were determined to make a splash in their first University Cup appearance. In their quarterfinal round, the MRU Cougars matched up against the TMU Bold. Going into this game, the MRU Cougars were considered slight favourites. The Cougars played a better regular season with their 22-6 record as opposed to TMU's 17-11 record, thanks to their overwhelming star power, but nothing was guaranteed in this single-game-elimination tournament.

The first period was fierce, with five total penalties, including a pair of roughing calls that were handed out to Liam Ross of TMU and Teague Patton of MRU. Both teams scored a goal apiece, with Hanus opening the scoring for the Cougars thanks to assists from Patton and Connor Bouchard.

Heading into the second period in a 1-1 tie, both teams enacted some serious scoring. Patton potted home

MRU's second goal of the game on a man-advantage, making them 2 for 2 on the powerplay. Only four minutes later, veteran forward Spencer Moe scored MRU's third consecutive powerplay goal, but TMU struck back to keep it a one-goal game as the second period ended with the Cougars up 3-2.

The third period was stressful for fans of both teams. MRU may have skated onto the ice with a 3-2 lead, but TMU would not let them win that easily. One minute into the final regulation period, Patton scored his second goal of the game, extending the lead to 4-2 and leaving TMU trailing behind by two goals.

The lead was short-lived, though, as the Bold turned up their energy and scored two shorthanded goals to tie the game. Neither team could break the tie despite creating an array of high-quality chances, and the regulation buzzer soon sounded with the game at a 4-4 tie, necessitating extra periods.

Overtime in regular season hockey consists of one full period of 5-on-5 play, but if no goals are scored, the teams duke it out in a shootout. Things change in the playoffs and tournaments, though, as the teams play as many 20-minute periods of 5-on-5 hockey until a goal is scored.

TMU and MRU took "as many" literally, as it took five overtime periods to decide the result of this game. During the first four periods of overtime, TMU and MRU went through what was possibly the most physically and mentally taxing hockey these men have ever played in their careers.

Running on complete adrenaline and determination, after five gruelling periods of overtime, the game ended with a goal by TMU Bold defenceman Spencer Shugrue. Shugrue was able to score off a bouncing puck in a battle of bodies in front of MRU goalie Shane Farkas at the 143-minute mark.

After six hours and 33 minutes, TMU came out

victorious and finally ended the longest hockey game in U SPORTS men's hockey history.

### Still a successful season

Not winning a National Championship stings, but the fact that MRU's men's hockey team even made it to the University Cup is a success in and of itself. Against much bigger post-secondary institutions, the Cougars dominated their conference in the regular season and made their first ever Canada West Finals by beating a University of Alberta Golden Bears squad that has had players practice and play real ice time with the Edmonton Oilers NHL team.

Losing in the finals to the University of Saskatchewan Huskies hurts, but taking the best team in the conference to a full three-game series and even winning an overtime game against them is a huge step for the program. Talented players like Hanus, Bouchard, Farkas and more have made MRU their home and under the great coaching of Bert Gilling, MRU has become a force to reckon with in Canada West.

Now with a University Cup appearance under their belt and having played the longest game in U SPORTS men's hockey history, the Cougars have earned national recognition for their excellence. Two years ago, the MRU women's hockey team made a Cinderella run to win the school's first National Championship in any sport.

Even though the men's hockey team did not earn the same jewelry, they can join their female counterparts and say they made their university proud on the national stage.

# Clipping Red Bull's wings

*Exposing the most successful F1 team of the modern era*

**Zafir Nagji**, Sports Editor

Formula One (F1) is back and two races into the 2025 season, fans have been treated to a healthy dose of captivating action. From the numerous crashes at the wet and wild Australian Grand Prix to Ferrari's double disqualification at the gruelling Chinese Grand Prix and every McLaren victory in between, 2025 is set to be the most entertaining season of the modern ground effect era, which began in 2022. However, it hasn't all been smooth sailing as Red Bull Racing, who have been a polarizing but dominant force of this era, have stirred up yet another controversy regarding their driver lineup for 2025.

## Trouble in paradise

One unfortunate but common theme in recent seasons has been the controversies surrounding the Red Bull Racing team. The team exceeded the budget cap in 2021, senior advisor Helmut Marko made repeated racist comments towards Sergio Pérez through 2022-23 and team principal Christian Horner was accused of sexual harassment and workplace misconduct in 2024.

However, despite all of the noise surrounding the Austrian outfit, Red Bull Racing has been the best team on the track for most of this era. This is thanks to the dominant driving of Max Verstappen, who scored more points individually in 2023 (575) than Mercedes-AMG (409), who finished second in the Constructors' Championship. In 2024, though, Verstappen could not bring his team a third consecutive championship, but still took home a Drivers' Championship victory despite stiff competition from McLaren, Ferrari, and Mercedes-AMG.

Verstappen's ex-teammate,

Pérez, made several comments throughout his four-year tenure with the team regarding the car's lack of balance, harsh ride quality, and tight operating window, but was key in securing victories with his defensive driving style and remarkable tire management skills.

After a disappointing season in 2024, Pérez was relieved of his duties and did not receive a race seat on any team for 2025.

Meanwhile, Red Bull Racing's junior team, Racing Bulls, had a tumultuous 2024, starting the season with Japanese wheelman Yuki Tsunoda and fan-favourite Daniel Ricciardo. However, the Australian driver struggled to extract maximal performance out of the car all year and was let go after the Singapore Grand Prix in favour of reserve driver Liam Lawson, who scored four points in six races to close out the year. Tsunoda finished the year in great form, scoring 30 of his team's 46 points to secure 12th place in the Drivers' Championship.

However, F1.com reported a stipulation in Lawson's contract that had a major influence in Red Bull Racing's decision-making process when it came to replacing Pérez.

"If Red Bull didn't offer [Lawson] a race seat for next season (or find him a seat elsewhere)... then he would be released," the report indicated.

So, under the guise of preventing Lawson from signing with a rival team, Red Bull fast-tracked Lawson onto the main team, signing the Kiwi driver to drive alongside Verstappen in the new RB21 racecar.

In a vacuum, this seems like a sound business decision with little racial prejudice to make note of. However, Marko repeatedly made racist comments towards



**Yuki Tsunoda, left, will replace Liam Lawson, right, at Red Bull Racing after the New Zealander failed to score points in consecutive races and was demoted to Racing Bulls, Red Bull's junior team. Photos courtesy of Instagram/ @yukitsunoda0511 and @liamlawson30**

Pérez during his time on the team, blatantly stereotyping him and even misidentifying where the Mexican driver is from.

Taking that into account, Red Bull Racing expediting their rookie driver into their most important seat instead of promoting their longest-tenured junior driver no longer seems like an unprejudiced decision.

## The (Yu)ki to success

The Honda-supported driver used the snub as motivation and qualified in fifth position (P5) for the Australian Grand Prix, ahead of superstar drivers in faster cars like Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc's Ferraris. A botched strategy call caused Tsunoda to finish the race outside of the points in P12, but that was still better than Lawson's woeful weekend.

After qualifying P18, Lawson was forced to start from the pit lane, due to his team making alterations to the car in between qualifying and the race. He continued

to disappoint in the race, crashing his RB21 on lap 47 and failing to finish his first race with his new team.

Tsunoda carried that momentum with him into the Chinese Grand Prix weekend, where he finished in P6 at the Sprint Race and qualified P9 for the actual race. However, Racing Bulls pulled another strategy error, forcing Tsunoda to pit twice while most other teams pitted just once and relegating him to a P16 finish.

Lawson, meanwhile, finished the Sprint Race in P14 and set the slowest qualifying lap for the race. Once again, Red Bull altered his car before the race to try and help him extract the most performance during the race, but the Kiwi driver finished in P12 and claimed the setup changes "just didn't work." That P12 may seem better than Tsunoda's P16, but then again, Lawson is in the superior car, one which Verstappen drove to P3 in Australia and P4 in China.

F1 media immediately churned out a series of dramatic headlines, ripping

into Red Bull Racing for choosing Lawson over Tsunoda and rumouring that the team might swap the two drivers.

On March 27, those rumours became true as the team announced Lawson would be demoted to the Racing Bulls team and Tsunoda would finally be given a seat at Red Bull Racing.

Tsunoda's first weekend with Red Bull Racing will be at the Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka Circuit from April 3-5. He'll have three practice sessions to get used to the RB21 before qualifying on April 4 and subsequently racing on April 5. Lawson, meanwhile, will begin his arduous climb back to the upper echelon of the sport as he attempts to redeem himself and prove he is worthy of a seat on the grid.

For the full version of this article, which includes Marko's racist remarks and an in-depth analysis of the 2025 season so far, check out the online version on thereflector.ca or download our app.

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**2** goals scored by Teague Patton in MRU's quintuple-overtime loss to the TMU Bold in their first-ever U SPORTS University Cup

**3** shutouts for Calgary Flames goaltender Dustin Wolf, the first rookie in franchise history to reach this milestone

**33** points per game for Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, likely to win MVP this season, the first Canadian to do so since Steve Nash

**3** hits conceded by the Toronto Blue Jays in their first win of the season, an 8-2 domination of the Baltimore Orioles